

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANTANA 00916 01 OF 02 171503Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----171834Z 040759 /45S

R 171411Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9224
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
CINCPAC
CINCUSNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANTANANARIVO 0916
EXDIS
E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PLOS, PFOR, MARR, US, MA, XO
SUBJECT: SPECIAL USG EMISSARY ON INDIAN OCEAN

REFS: (A) PARIS 14331 (B) ABIDJAN 4911 (C) ANTANANARIVO 0831

1. SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST. THIS MESSAGE PROPOSES
THAT A SPECIAL EMISSARY BE SENT TO VISIT MADAGASCAR AND OTHER
SELECTED COUNTRIES IN THIS AREA FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS
WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN AND TO DISCUSS
PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECENT INITIATIVE FOR MILITARY
RESTRAINT THEREIN. THIS PROPOSAL IS MADE PRIMARILY
WITH A VIEW TO THE BENEFICIAL EFFECT IT MIGHT HAVE
ON OUR RELATIONS WITH THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
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MADAGASCAR (DRM), PRESENTLY STALEMATED BY BILATERAL
PROBLEMS, BUT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE POTENTIAL FOR BENEFITS
ELSEWHERE IN REGION AND TO BE CONSISTENT WITH VIEWS
RECENTLY EXPRESSED AT AFRICAN CHIEFS OF MISSION (COM)
CONFERENCE AT ABIDJAN (REFS A & B). ADDRESSEES MAY WITH
TO SUBMIT THEIR VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT. END SUMMARY AND
ACTION REQUEST.

2. OUR MAIN PROBLEM HERE IS THAT CERTAIN CONTENTIOUS BILATERAL ISSUES DOMINATE AND SOUR OUR OVERALL RELATIONS WITH THE DRM. AS THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE PROBLEMS, DRM TAKEOVER OF OUR NASA STATION AND NATIONALIZATION OF TWO AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES, DO NOT APPEAR SUSCEPTIBLE TO EARLY SOLUTION, I THINK WE SHOULD LOOK TO OTHER MEANS TO IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH WOULD NOT COMPROMISE OUR POSITION ON THE BILATERAL ISSUES. ONE WAY IS BE SIDESTEPPING THE CONTENTIOUS ITEMS AND ENGAGING THE DRM IN ACTIVE DISCUSSIONS ON OTHER SUBJECTS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. SOME ATTENTION TO THE DRM'S VIEWS IN THIS RESPECT COULD AT LEAST IMPROVE THE TONE OF OUR RELATIONS AND MIGHT EVEN THEREBY CONTRIBUTE TO RESOLVING THE BILATERAL PROBLEMS.

3. AN OBVIOUS AREA OF MUTUAL INTEREST IS THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE PROPOSALS RECENTLY MADE BY PRESIDENT CARTER. DRM PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA HAS SHOWN INTEREST IN THE AMERICAN PROPOSALS (REF C) AND IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE EXPRESSED REGRET THAT THE USG IS WILLING TO DISCUSS THE INDIAN OCEAN WITH THE USSR BUT HAS NOT CONSULTED THE COUNTRIES WHICH LIVE IN IT.

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER MR. MACFARLANE S/S-O.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ANTANANARIVO 0916
EXDIS

4. WHILE THIS SUBJECT COULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AS ARE OTHER MULTILATERAL ISSUES, THE HIGH LEVEL OF DRM INTEREST AND THE RESPONSIVE CHORD WHICH THE PROPOSAL HAS STRUCK ELSEWHERE IN AREA (REF B) MAY JUSTIFY SPECIAL TREATMENT. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE READY ACCESS AND EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH THE PROFESSIONALS AT BUREAU LEVEL OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, I DO NOT KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT OR WITH WHAT EFFECTIVENESS OUR REPRESENTATIONS THERE PERCOLATE UPWARD TO THE UPPER REACHES OF THE MALAGASY GOVERNMENT, WITH WHICH OUR CONTACT IS EXTREMELY LIMITED. I WOULD PREFER TO GIVE THIS PROPOSAL MORE THAN NORMAL TREATMENT IN ORDER NOT TO RISK LOSING CHANCE IT PRESENTS FOR SOLID GAIN IN US/DRM RELATION.

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5. I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT A SPECIAL EMISSARY BE SENT OUT FROM WASHINGTON TO MADAGASCAR AND OTHER SELECTED INDIAN OCEAN STATES. TO BE EFFECTIVE THIS EMISSARY SHOULD BE AT THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEVEL AND/OR ABLE TO SAY THAT HE IS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING FOR INDIAN OCEAN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. EVEN IF OUR OWN POSITION ON THESE DISCUSSIONS HAS NOT BEEN FORMULATED HE CAN SAY THAT HE IS HERE TO OBTAIN THE VIEWS OF THE VISITED STATES ON WAYS AND MEANS TO EFFECT MILITARY RESTRAINT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. HE COULD ALSO USE THE OCCASION TO:
A) BRING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS UP TO DATE ON SOVIET FACILITIES IN SOMALIA; B) EXPLAIN THE US STAKE IN FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN THESE WATERS (AS WELL AS ACKNOWLEDGE THE LEGITIMATE SOVIET INTEREST THEREIN); AND C) COMPARE OUR PRESENCE WITH THAT OF THE SOVIETS.

6 I RECOGNIZE UNLIKLIHOOD OF PROGRESS WITH THE SOVIETS CITED BY PANEL I AT ABIDJAN (REF B, PARA 7). NEVERTHELESS I BELIEVE THAT SUGGESTED INITIATIVE ON OUR PART WOULD BENEFIT US POSITION ON THIS ISSUE AS WELL AS IN MORE GENERAL FIELD CITED IN PARA 9, REF A, OF "SOLICITING THE VIEWS OF AFRICAN LEADERS ON CRITICAL ISSUES", AND "SEEKING TO INFORM AFRICAN LEADERS, ETC.".

7. I LEARNED IN ABIDJAN THAT AT LEAST THREE OTHER AF POSTS WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO SUCH A VISIT. VARIOUS COMBINATIONS OF COUNTRIES COULD BE INCLUDED: AF COUNTRIES ON INDIAN OCEAN AND RED SEA, AF COUNTRIES ON INDIAN OCEAN ONLY, INSULAR AF COUNTRIES IN INDIAN OCEAN ONLY, ETC.

I AM NOT REPEATING THIS MESSAGE TO ANY NON-AF POSTS AND
LEAVE IT TO DEPARTMENT, IF THIS PROPOSAL IS PURSUED, TO
DECIDE ON INCLUSION OF NON-AFRICAN COUNTRIES ON LIST OF
THOSE TO BE VISITED. MEANWHILE ADDRESSEES ARE INVITED TO
COMMENT ON THIS PROPOSAL IN GENERAL AND DESIRABILITY OF
SUCH A VISIT TO THEIR COUNTRIES.BARRETT

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Message Attributes

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